

## Relationship between Perceptions of Parental Punitive Discipline and Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours among Selected Kenyan Secondary School Students

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### Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between perceptions of parental punitive discipline and involvement in non-illegal and minor-illegal delinquent behaviours among selected secondary school students in Nairobi County, Kenya. A correlational survey design was employed and the participants comprised 219 females and 191 male students selected by use of stratified and simple random sampling methods. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The study reported that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between parental corporal punishment and adolescents' non-illegal delinquent behaviours. However, parental corporal punishment did not significantly relate to adolescents' involvement in minor-illegal delinquent behaviours. The study recommended that parents should avoid use of punitive disciplining strategies which influenced adolescents' non-illegal delinquent behaviours.

**Keywords:** perceptions, parents, punitive discipline, involvement, Delinquent Behaviours, Adolescent Student, Secondary Schools

### 1. Introduction

Behaviour problems among Kenyan students have been of great concern (Kariuki & Aloka, 2014). However, it is recognized that parents play an important and influential role in a child's development through the provision of emotional support as they interact with the offsprings. This interaction and related emotional relationship shapes the child's personality, thereby influencing mental development. It is generally accepted that parents are the first socialising agents for their children's behaviour. It is common practice for parents to teach their children social rules and roles by explaining, rewarding and punishing them. However, sometimes parents unconsciously socialise the conducts they may not want their children to adapt. As such, parents are often blamed when children engage in antisocial behaviour. Some parents are warm, responsive and child centred in rearing their children. Other parents are rejecting, unresponsive, and essentially uninvolved with their children. On the other hand, some parents are demanding and restrictive on their children while others are permissive and undemanding. The permissive parents tend to allow their children to do as they wish. When a parent is warm and loving the child is likely to want to maintain the parents' approval. To secure the approval some children are likely to avoid any situations that would make them lose the parents' love (Grusec & Davidov, 2007).

A survey carried out by UNICEF (2007) on Kenya Children revealed that children suffer from parental violence. In a focus group discussion one child sought advice on how to deal with unfair parents who send children out of the house when they make mistakes. The researcher affirmed the need for parenting information and asserted that children avoid

situations that put them in danger. The study suggests that children have perceptions of their parents' punitive behaviours. Children who perceive their parents as unfairly punishing are likely to rebel against their authority. Juvenile delinquency is likely to be precipitated by parental physical and psychological punishment. Such punishments are common in Kenya as revealed by African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, ANPPCAN (2002). The ANPPCAN survey showed that an average of 5 children get severely beaten every day. It revealed that the most common forms of abuse in Kenya are physical and emotional abuse. The cases of child abuse were found to be higher in urban slums than rural Kenya. Children who experience physical and psychological abuse are likely to make poor behaviour choices and may eventually get involved in delinquent behaviours. Such children are likely to interpret the physical and psychological punishment as rejection. The perceptions of parental rejection are likely to lead adolescents' into negative behaviours. Physical punishment is less common during adolescence. However, when corporal punishment is used at an early age the effects may linger on to the adolescence stage. Physical punishment can lead to adolescents' compliance to rules when they are under their parents' supervision. However, the adolescents are likely to engage in delinquent behaviours while they are away from school and parental authority. Nye (1958) asserts that the physically punishing parents can lead their children to resent them. Besides, adolescents are unlikely to adopt the values and qualities of people that they dislike. Parents who treat their teenagers harshly are likely to lead them to rebelling against their authority. The rebellion is likely to manifest itself in involvement in antisocial behaviours.

The delinquency problem seems to be blamed on poor parenting. Such problem behaviours have been found to have negative correlation with school engagement and academic achievement (Bryant, Schulenberg, O'Malley, Bachman., & Johnson 2003). Some investigations on adolescents' problem behaviours in Kenya have been done. The findings revealed that harsh, cruel, neglecting and rejecting parental behaviours correlated with higher manifest aggression mean scores. The researcher focused on adolescents' aggression. So far, there are no conclusive studies on the relationship between parental behaviours and adolescents' delinquent conducts. The researcher therefore investigated the relationship between perceptions of parental punitive discipline and involvement in delinquent behaviours among selected Kenyan secondary school students.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The study was informed by the social control theory. The theory by Nye, (1958) assumes that children are inherently delinquent and that they need control in order to develop compliance to social law, and that, a failure in social control leads to maladaptive behaviours within an individual. The failure may not necessarily be real but may be interpreted by the child as so. The social control theory examines four ways in which the family controls their children's behaviour.

### 2.1 Theoretical framework

Some parents use direct control that involves punishing children for undesirable behaviours and reward them for compliant ones. The methods used in direct control are checking, rewarding, supervising, putting sanctions, disapproving and excluding. The negative emotions that emerge can weaken social bonds (attachment) with parents. Therefore, adolescents who hold negative emotions against their parents are likely to be attracted to delinquent peers. The second approach that is used in socialising children by parents is the internal control. It involves parents training their children and giving explanations of behaviour consequences. Children internalise these trainings and accept the norms and rules as if they were their own. The children develop both conscience and self-control that guides and guards them against antisocial behaviours. This way they are likely to behave in prosocial ways even when unsupervised. If common morality is lacking in the family the adolescent is likely to perceive the discrepancy between what is demanded and the parent's behaviour.

The third control is the indirect control which involves an individual behaving in desirable ways in order to appeal to those who are closest to them. In this case, a strong attachment bond creates an avoidance of undesirable behaviour in anticipation of parental disapproval or deterrence measures. Parents' indirect control for behaviour is effective when based on affection and identification. The control works in contexts of parent-child affection. It is a context in which adolescents expect and value affection and fears its loss. The fourth control is a needs satisfaction control. It is a combination of two forms of control that are internal and external. Parents create a needs satisfaction control in their children by developing their conscience and meeting their needs. A developed conscience makes children less likely to engage in delinquent behaviours. On the other hand, the needs satisfaction makes the children to have an expectation that if they behave in undesirable ways they risk having their needs unmet. The need for conformity develops an innate

tendency for fear of rejection by important others and a search for validation. Nye Ivan's control theory asserts that delinquent behaviours result from a combination of positive learning and weak ineffective social control.

Social Control theory suggests that parental control, punishment and parent-child bonding can influence children's behaviours. If the child senses over controlling, excessive punishment, lack of and lack of affection, he or she can rebel against authority and become delinquent. The theory was helpful in explaining the relationship between parental support, monitoring, disciplinary measures and family conflicts as well as alcohol use and adolescents' delinquent behaviours. Parental direct control and harsh parenting according to Ivan Nye are significant in influencing adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours Hirschi (1969).

## 2.2 Literature review

Studies have been done on the parental punitive discipline strategies and adolescents' delinquent behaviours. Muchiri, (2013) studied the relationship between perceived parental nurturance and problem behaviours among secondary school students in selected counties in Kenya. The study found a significant negatively correlated relationship between perceived parental nurturance and problem behaviour among the adolescent students. The findings revealed high perceived parental nurturance scores for both male and female students as well as low occurrence of problem behaviours. The study also found that widowed fathers were perceived as the most nurturing parents. The study also found that there was a higher occurrence of internalizing problem behaviours compared to externalizing problem behaviours.

Grusec and Davidov (2007) observe that, some parents use threats, love withdrawal, isolation and ignoring as disciplinary measures for their children. Use of punitive discipline may foster compliance but also instil guilt and anxiety. This emotional state is likely to make an adolescent needy for affection and affiliation with delinquent peers in the absence of a positive parent-child relationship. Gershoff (2002) explains that mild physical punishment like smacking is beneficial for immediate compliance. The harmful "effects" of corporal punishment arise from the practice of harsh parenting which amounts to physical abuse. Baumrind (1991) distinguishes between parents who use abusive physical punishment and those who use it normatively in frequency and intensity. Baumrind describes normative physical punishment as less harmful compared to verbal punishment. However, she asserts that both punishments as associated with poorer behaviour outcome. Save the children UK-Scotland (2000) conducted a survey in England involving 1300 children aged 6-18. The findings indicated that, children described punishment as terrifying, humiliating and also described punishing parents as unloving. Overall the children viewed the use of physical punishment as wrong and ineffective as well as physically and emotionally harmful. Children (94%) said there are many ways other than using physical punishment that parents and adults can use to discipline them. Some children (74%) said it was wrong for a parent or other adult to hit a child. The children viewed the use of physical punishment as unreasonable and as a spontaneous response by adults triggered by anger, frustration or stress. Children reported that they felt confused when their parents and other adults teach them that hitting is wrong and yet they use physical punishment to discipline them. However, the reviewed study did not expose the effect of corporal punishment on children's behaviours. However it does help in creating an understanding on what children feel about it. With such negative feelings children are unlikely to comply with parental demands. The current researcher thus embarked on establishing link between punitively disciplined children and their behaviour outcome.

An earlier reviewed study that was conducted among Pittsburgh youth by Hoeve et al., (2007) examined parental physical punishment and adolescents' delinquency. The findings revealed that physical punishment is not significantly related delinquency. In addition, Segal (1995) examined the incidences of physical abuse defined as "discipline" in three cities, in India. Findings showed that, 56.9 % of parents reported having used acceptable violence, 41.9 % abusive violence while 2.9 % had used "extreme" discipline. The study reveals that corporal punishment is a common parental disciplinary approach with children. However, the study did not examine the association between parental physical punishment and children' behaviour. The current study therefore furthered the study by investigating the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of parental use of punitive discipline and adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours.

Kinai (2002) examined parental behaviours and adolescents' manifest aggression. The study employed self-report measures and data was analysed by use of descriptive statistics, Chi-square test and Factor Analysis. The findings indicated that, adolescents' reported that, 52.7% of parents discussed the consequences of their misbehaviour, 31.1% showed disappointment. Some parents - 2.3% were indifferent or ignored their adolescents' behaviours, 3.7 % of the parents withdrew privileges and 8.5 % physically punished their adolescents. Adolescents whose parents used inductive

reasoning were significantly less aggressive than those whose parents used corporal punishment. However, Kinai's study did not examine how physical discipline associated with other delinquent behaviours, a gap that is filled by the present study.

The reviewed literatures on parental punitive punishment and adolescents' delinquent behaviours indicate that physical punishment is common across culture. In England physical punishment is viewed by children as unnecessary, harmful and ineffective in behaviour shaping. The reviewed studies seem to concur that physical punishment is undesirable although used in many communities in the world. Children suggest physical punishment has no value in shaping behaviour. This study investigated the relationship between adolescents' parental punitive disciplining and their involvement in delinquent conducts.

### 2.3 Goal of the Study

The study sought to examine the relationship between perceptions of parental punitive discipline and involvement in delinquent behaviours among selected Kenyan secondary school students. The following null and alternative hypothesis was tested.

H<sub>01</sub>: *There is no statistically significant relationship between perceptions of parental punitive discipline and involvement in delinquent behaviours among selected Kenyan secondary school students.*

H<sub>02</sub>: *There is a statistically significant relationship between perceptions of parental punitive discipline and involvement in delinquent behaviours among selected Kenyan secondary school students.*

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research design

The study adopted a correlational survey design. The design allows the researcher to describe different events, experiences, or behaviours and look for links between them (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister & Jeanne, 2011). However, the design does not enable researchers to determine causes of behavior. Such a design is useful when the objective is to find out the relationships between variables but does not need to prove causation (Mugenda, 2008 & Robson, 2002). The design was appropriate because the researcher needed to correlate adolescents' perceptions of parental behaviours and their delinquent behaviours.

### 3.2 Population and sample

In this study the research population was adolescents in Nairobi County Public Secondary Schools. Nairobi has 60 Public Secondary School which had registered for KCSE exam by the year 2010 as shown by the Sampling frame. There were male adolescents in 19 Boys' schools, female adolescents in 20 Girls' schools and both male and female adolescents in 21 Co-educational schools. Using simple random sampling, two schools were selected from each single gender category of schools. In addition, one Co-educational school was selected by simple random sampling. Further, adolescents in one Form 1 and in one Form 3 in each of the sampled schools were randomly selected for schools with more than 1 stream. It was observed that an inclusion of form two adolescents for the study would provide a very close age range since the Form 1 and Form 2 students are very close in age. The Form 4s were left out as they were busy preparing for exams.

The selection of form 1 and 3 students allowed for a good spread cross-section range of adolescents age. According to Gay, (1992) a 10% of a population constitutes an adequate representative sample of study. As such, 90 students in each of the 5 schools will constitute an adequate sample of 450 adolescents. Out of the target sample of 450, 97.7% participated in the study. However, 6.6% of the participants' questionnaires were discarded for low completion. As a result a final sample of 410 was registered for the study.

### 3.3 Research instruments

The questionnaire was used to assess adolescents' perceptions of parental behaviours while the behaviour check list was used to measure adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours. Self-report measures have high validity with respect to objective measures of delinquent behaviour (Regoli & Hewitt, 1997). The researcher used Chronbach's alpha to estimate reliability coefficient of the self-report items (54) and behavior checklist items (30) used in the study.

Perceived parental support was assessed using 6 items (Section B). The items sought to find out if parents discussed issues with an open and friendly way, whether the adolescents felt their parents met their special needs, provided security, protection and comfort when troubled. Further the adolescents were asked whether they enjoyed joint activities with the parents and if the parents participated in their school activities. The responses were in always, often and rarely form. Items in Section C assessed perceived parental monitoring. The section comprised items that assessed adolescents' perceptions of parental behaviour monitoring. Adolescents responded to questions on whether their parents sought to know their friends, forbid them to do things they especially enjoyed when they misbehaved, and if parents set clear rules of behaviour. Further, adolescents reported whether the parents were keen to know their where-about and activities. In addition, the teenagers indicated if their parents come to school to check on how they behaved. The construct validity was ascertained through the use of peers, expert judges and panels. The approach also enhanced content validity (Nachmias & Nachmias 1987). Criterion validity was also used the correlation finding were assessed for significance by testing the null hypotheses at pre- specified alpha levels. For the instrument used in this research a Chronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.827 was obtained after taking the average of intercorrelations of the items categories for each variable.

### 3.4 Data collection procedures

In preparation to collect data the researcher obtained permission from Graduate school of Kenyatta University. The researcher also sought a permit from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Further, permission was also sought and granted from the sampled schools and the selected adolescents in secondary schools. Clear instructions were given by the researcher and the students were relaxed by giving a non biasing talk. The Form 1 and 3 students were issued with numbered questionnaires. It took about 30 minutes for the questionnaires to be filled. After completion, the instruments were collected

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed by using the descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical tests such as pearson moment product correlation coefficient was used.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Adolescents' Perceptions of Parental Punitive Discipline and their involvement in Delinquent Behaviours

Two aspects of punitive parental discipline were examined, these included use of harsh words and corporal punishment. In the following section both the descriptive and inferential statistical findings are presented and discussed.

#### 4.1.1 Statistical Results

Table 1 presents the results on parental use of harsh words and adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours. The results show that 6.8% of the adolescents perceived rare use of harsh word, 47.3% perceived use of harsh words often and 45.9% perceived use of harsh words always. The highest percentage of the adolescents who got involved non-illegal (21.4%) and minor-illegal (67.9%) delinquent behaviours perceived rare use of parental harsh words in the family. The lowest percentage of the adolescents who were never involved in non-illegal (6.7%) and minor-illegal (45.9%) delinquent behaviours perceived that parental harsh words were used often in the family. The percentage of the adolescents who were involved in occasional non-illegal (66.7%) and occasional minor-illegal (28.6%) delinquent behaviours perceived rare use of parental harsh word.

**Table 1:** Perceived Parental Use of Harsh Words and Adolescents' Delinquent behaviours involvement.

Parental Use of Harsh Words	Adolescents' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours							
	Non-illegal			Total	Minor illegal			Total
	Never	occasional	Persistent		Never	occasional	Persistent	
Rare	6	19	3	28	19	8	1	28
	21.4%	67.9%	10.7%	100%	67.9%	28.6%	3.6%	100%
Often	13	151	30	194	89	104	1	194
	6.7%	77.8%	15.5%	100%	45.9%	53.6%	.5%	100%
Always	13	140	35	188	96	90	2	188
	6.9%	74.5%	18.6%	100%	51.1%	47.9%	1.1%	100%
Total	32	310	68	410	204	202	4	410
	7.8%	75.6%	16.6%	100%	49.8%	49.3%	1.0%	100%

On the other hand, the lowest percentage of the adolescents who were involved in persistent non-illegal (10.7%) and persistent minor-illegal (.5%) delinquent behaviours perceived that they got parental harsh word rarely. Highest percentage of the adolescents who were occasionally involved in non-illegal (77.8%) and minor-illegal (53.6%) delinquent behaviours perceived that parental harsh words were used often in the family.

The researcher also examined adolescents' perceptions of parental use of physical punishment as a punitive disciplining technique and adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours. As shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Perceived Parental Use of Physical Punishment and Adolescents' Delinquent behaviours involvement

Physical Punishment	Adolescents' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours							
	None Illegal			Total	Minor illegal			Total
	Never	Occasional	Persistent		Never	occasional	persistent	
Never	6	1	4	31	18	13	0	31
	19.4%	67.7%	12.9%	100%	58.1%	41.9%	.0%	100.0%
Often	8	133	33	174	84	86	4	174
	4.6%	76.4%	19.0%	100%	48.3%	49.4%	2.3%	100%
Always	18	156	31	205	102	103	0	205
	8.8%	76.1%	15.1%	100%	49.8%	50.2%	.0%	100%
Total	32	310	68	410	204	202	4	410
	7.8%	75.6%	16.6%	100%	49.8%	49.3%	1.0%	100%

Some 410 respondents indicated their perceptions on parental use of corporal punishment. The highest percentage of the adolescents who were never involved in non-illegal (19.4%) and in minor-illegal (58.1%) delinquent behaviours comprised those who perceived that they never got corporal punishment. On the other hand, the lowest percentage of the adolescents who were never involved in non-illegal (4.6%) and in minor-illegal (48.3%) delinquent behaviours perceived that they often got corporal punishment. On the other hand, adolescents who perceived that they never got corporal punishment comprised the lowest percentage of those who were occasionally involved in non-illegal (67.7%) and minor-illegal (41.9%) delinquent behaviours. Further the adolescents who perceived that they got corporal punishment often comprised the highest percentage of adolescents who were involved in persistent non-illegal (19%) and persistent minor-illegal (2.3%) delinquent behaviours. The descriptive statistics seem to indicate that increased punitive discipline is linked to increased involvement in delinquent behaviour.

The researcher tested the relationship between adolescents' perception of parental punitive disciplining and adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours using Pearson Product Moment correlation. To test the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of parental punitive discipline and adolescents' delinquent behaviours the alternative and null hypotheses were set as below:-

*H<sub>a1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between adolescents' perceptions of parental punitive discipline (use of harsh words and severe corporal punishment) and their involvement in non-illegal and minor illegal delinquent behaviours.*

*H<sub>o1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between adolescents' perceptions of parental punitive discipline strategies (use of harsh words and corporal punishment) and their involvement in non-illegal and minor- illegal*

*delinquent behaviours.*

As shown in Table 3, Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was computed at  $\alpha = .05$ . The correlation between adolescents' perceptions of parental use of harsh words and non-illegal delinquent behaviours was  $r (.098) = .047, p < .05$ . The findings revealed that there is a slight weak positive relationship between parental use of harsh words and adolescents' non-illegal delinquent behaviours. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{a3}$ ) was thus adopted at  $p < .05$ . Parents' frequent use of harsh words has some significant positive association with adolescents' involvement in non-illegal delinquent behaviours.

**Table 3:** Correlation between perceived Parental Punitive Discipline and Adolescent' Delinquent Behaviours

Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N=410	Psychological (harsh Words)	Physical Punishment
AD: non compliance	.086 .082	.006 .910
AD: Truancy	.076 .122	-.026 .602
AD: Violence	.002 .974	-.021 .676
AD: Substance abuse	.045 .366	.104* .035
AD: Stealing	.019 .697	-.093 .059
Non- illegal	.098* .047	-.012 .803
Minor- illegal	.028 .571	-.004 .937

\*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between adolescents' perceptions of parental use of harsh words and their minor-illegal delinquent behaviours was  $r (.028) = .571, p > .05$ . The null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) was thus retained. The result suggests that parental use of harsh words is not significantly related to adolescents' involvement in minor illegal behaviours (violence, substance abuse and stealing).

Further, the correlation results between adolescents' perceptions of parental corporal punishment and adolescents' non-illegal delinquent behaviours was  $r (.104) = .035, p < .05$ . The correlation results between adolescents' perceptions of parental corporal punishment and adolescents' minor-illegal delinquent behaviours was  $r (-.012) = .803, p > .05$ . The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{a3}$ ) was thus adopted. This indicates that there is some significant positive relationship between parental corporal punishment and adolescents' non-illegal delinquent behaviours. The null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) was retained for perceptions of parental corporal punishment and adolescents' minor-illegal delinquent behaviours. This indicates that parental corporal punishment has positive significant relationship with adolescents' involvement in non-illegal delinquent behaviours. In addition, parental corporal punishment does not significantly relate to adolescents' involvement in minor- illegal delinquent behaviours.

## 5. Discussion of Results

The descriptive statistical results on parental punitive disciplining seem to be linked to adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours. Frequent perceptions of parental use of harsh words and use of corporal punishment were more than those who never perceived the frequent use. The highest percentage of adolescents who were involved in non-illegal and minor illegal delinquent behaviours perceived frequently parental use of harsh word. On the other hand, the inferential statistical results indicated that there is a positive relationship between perceptions frequent parental use of harsh words and adolescents' involvement in non-illegal delinquent behaviours. However, adolescents' perceptions of parental use of harsh words and corporal punishment were found not related as' minor-illegal delinquent behaviours.

The findings were not surprising because parental use of harsh words and corporal punishment are likely to lead to psychological disturbance. As a result, adolescents may seek affiliation with delinquent peers who are more likely to accept them. The consequent association with delinquent peer is likely to induct them in negative behaviour. This

explains why increased frequency of harsh words and corporal punishment relates to more adolescents being involved in noncompliance and truancy. Parental use of punitive disciplinary measures arouses adolescents' hostility (Santrock, 2007). Nye' (1958) views adolescents who have developed a hostile relationship with their care givers as unlikely to conform to parental behaviour expectations. Baumrind (1991) demonstrates that power assertive parents are likely to make their children fearful, moody, and vulnerable to stressors. She asserts that children who are punitively disciplined develop very little control of their environment and receive very little gratification. The children also tend to have long term negative behaviour outcomes, are unfriendly and lack confidence. Hoffman (2000) explains that psychological disciplinary measure that involves the use of harsh words makes the children feel guilty. He further adds that the guilt emotions elevate the risk of delinquency among adolescents. The psychologist views on the effects of parental use of harsh words supports the positive relationship between parental use of harsh words and adolescents' delinquency. The current study also reveals that parental corporal punishment is significantly related to adolescents' non-illegal delinquent behaviours. The findings are thus consistent with Kinai's (2002) study findings that reveal that parental corporal punishment led to higher levels of adolescents' manifest aggression. Corporal punishment is also said to have harmful effects on children (Gershoff, 2002). The punishment alienates adolescents from their parents and weakens the parent-child bonds (Nye, 1958) Children loose trust in their parents and rebel from their behavior expectations (Larry, Brandunuc & Welsh, 2011). All together, the findings on the relationship between parental punitive disciplining (harsh words and physical punishment) and adolescents delinquency indicates that majority (over 60%) of the noncompliant, truant, violent substance abusing and stealing adolescents were from parents who used harsh words, and physically punishment. Adolescents' whose parents never used harsh words and corporal punishment were the minority (less than 40%) in involving in the delinquent behaviours.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Adolescents' perceptions of parents' use of harsh words is significantly related to adolescents' involvement in non-illegal delinquent behaviours. However, perceived parental use of harsh words is not significantly related to adolescents' involvement in minor-illegal delinquent behaviours. In addition, perceived parental use of corporal punishment is not significantly. The researcher found that some perceptions of parental behaviour relate to some delinquent behaviours and in some cases generalised delinquency. It was envisaged that the findings would have significant practical implications on parenting, education and counselling practice. Based on the findings, it was suggested that in developing policies for school management, the possible influence of parents on the behaviour of adolescent students be given more serious consideration. It was also suggested that when addressing problem behaviour issues in schools, educators should pay more attention to the relationship between perceived parental nurturance and problem behaviour. This is to avoid focusing on correcting problem behaviours without considering the possible influence of parental dynamics. Moreover, Parents should avoid use of punitive disciplining strategies because the perceived use of harsh words is significantly positively related to adolescents' non-illegal delinquent behaviours. Parental conflicts should be avoided, this recommendation is based on the findings that reveal that adolescents' perceptions of its increased frequency is significantly positively related to their minor- illegal delinquent behaviours and higher mean involvement in generalised delinquency. Teachers and school managers therefore need to increase surveillance on adolescents' behaviours to curb adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviours. The findings reveal that adolescents' perceptions of some parental behaviours have significant relationship with their involvement in non-illegal, minor-illegal and generalised delinquency. As such there is need for a multi-faceted approach to adolescents' behaviour management in schools, counseling for children who hold perceptions that their parents use excessive monitoring, punitive discipline, have conflicts and abuse alcohol. Another recommendation involves parent training skills to alleviate punitive discipline among parents. The Children's Department in various Ministries should recognise the role of parents in the behavioural adjustment of children and deliberately device policy for promoting parenting that employs moderate monitoring, lower cases of punitive discipline, conflicts, and alcohol abuse in the family.

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